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Aides of de Gaulle Linked to Scandal

By HENRY TANNER
Socialist to The New York Times

PARIS, Jan. 18—President de Gaulle was faced today with a national scandal that many observers believe could undermine his regime and cloud the political future of some of his Cabinet ministers and closest advisers.

Figuring in the scandal is the alleged suicide of Georges Figon, an underworld character with a literary inclination. He had been regarded as probably the only man either willing or able to shed full light on the kidnapping and probable murder of Mehdi Ben Barka, a Moroccan opposition leader who disappeared from a Paris street at noon last Oct. 29.

According to his own account in newspaper interviews and the testimony of others to the investigating magistrate, Figon was instrumental in the planning of the kidnapping in addition to participating in its execution.

Figon was found shot dead last night when policemen forced their way into his one-room apartment to arrest him. The police said the fatal shot had been fired just before they entered.

'Stavisky Affair' Recalled

Several French newspapers drew a parallel today with the "Stavisky affair" of the mid-thirties, which ended with the "apparent suicide" of the villain, a swindler, wrecked the careers of several members of Parliament, forced the resignation of two Cabinet ministers and then precipitated the fall of the Government of Premier Camille Chautemps.

Those who think the Ben Barka-Figon affair is a bitter blow to General de Gaulle give the following reasons:

"The reaction of many private citizens and public figures suggests that they feel his 'New' Republic has lost the reputation of integrity, purity and general orderliness that is so close to his heart."

Many editorial writers compared the Ben Barka-Figon affair unfavorably with the lesser scandals of pre-Gaullist regimes. During last month's election campaign, the President denounced the "rotten," "scandal-ridden" regimes of the past and made the high-mindedness of his own Government one of the key arguments for his reelection. Many observers said the General might not have been re-elected if the scandal had assumed its present dimensions.

"The scandal threatens irreparable damage to General de Gaulle's policy of a special, close relationship between France and the newly independent nations of Africa and Asia. Ben Barka was a hero and friend to many of the leaders of these nations. He had been the initiator and the organizer of the recent tri-continental conference of revolutionists in Havana."

Moroccan Link Reported

The Moroccan Government, which is regarded as reactionary by many of the progressive leaders of the "third" or uncommitted world, appears to be directly involved in the scandal. The French police officers involved are believed to have engineered Ben Barka's kidnapping at the request of a faction of the Moroccan Government.

The presence of Interior Minister Mohammed Oufkin, a rightist army leader, in Paris during the crucial days has been established. Figon had declared in a press interview that he had watched as the minister tortured Ben Barka in a suburban hideout.

Figon's death, moments before he was to have been arrested, came at a critical moment in the slow-moving investigation of the Ben Barka affair, when high ranking officers of various police branches started to accuse each other.

Figon had been free in Paris for more than two months and had been interviewed and photographed by reporters even though a warrant was out for him and he had been identified beyond doubt as a key figure in Ben Barka's kidnapping.

The police had pleaded that they did not know his whereabouts. But the mass publication news magazine Paris match appeared on the newstands this morning with a two-page picture showing Figon strolling and posing in front of Paris police headquarters.

This morning Maj. Marcel le



F. Poltecher

ABDUCTION RECALLED:
Mehdi Ben Barka, a Moroccan opposition leader whose disappearance is involved in current French scandal.

Roy, a secret service officer, was relieved of his duties for having waited two days before reporting to his superiors that one of his subordinates had given him what amounted to a running account of Ben Barka's kidnapping. The subordinate, Antoine Lopez, has confessed to having been one of the kidnappers.

The Department of Alien Documentation and Counterespionage, to which both Major le Roy and Lopez belong, is under the direct control of the office of Premier Georges Pompidou.

Major le Roy accused the head of the political section of the General Information Bureau yesterday of having followed the kidnapping even more closely than he. The bureau, which is an organization comparable to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, is ultimately responsible to Interior Minister Roger Frey.

The name of Jacques Foccart, one of General de Gaulle's most trusted and closest advisers for

the last seven years, was also brought into the scandal a few days ago. He was named by Lopez as having been kept informed of the preparations for Ben Barka's kidnapping, according to the testimony of a policeman who was one of the alleged kidnappers.

Mr. Foccart holds one of the top positions in the Presidential Palace. Officially he advises the President mainly on African affairs. Unofficially he is known to have immense power over all or most of the country's many secret services.

Uneasiness Over Figon

With all these ramifications coming gradually to light during the last few days, the circumstances of Figon's death have created a deep uneasiness here, although nobody explicitly contests the suicide.

Nouvel Observateur, an anti-Gaullist weekly, wrote:

"Let's say that the death of Figon serves the interest of all those who for the last two and a half months have been trying to hush up 'the scandal'."

Le Monde, in citing the Stavisky affair, recalled that Sacha Stavisky, a swindler who was the cause for the downfall of many powerful politicians of his day, had been found shot. He was discovered by two policemen who wanted to arrest him.

Gaston Defferre, Socialist Mayor of Marseilles, in a newspaper article this morning called on General de Gaulle to "repudiate" both Mr. Foccart, his adviser, and Interior Minister Frey.

Pierre Lazareff, the staunch Gaullist editor in chief of the mass-circulation daily France-Soir, appealed to the Government to tell the truth about "how French policemen and members of counterespionage services got involved."

Numerous public figures, including many Gaullists, signed a newspaper appeal for clarification of the extent to which members of the Government were implicated in the affair.